

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 QUEBEC 00057 091835Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01  
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15  
USIA-06 OMB-01 /059 W  
-----091844Z 113062 /44

P R 091655Z FEB 77  
FM AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 889  
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA PRIORITY  
AMCONSUL TORONTO POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUEBEC 0057

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PINT, CA  
SUBJECT: COMING BYELECTIONS IN QUEBEC

REF: QUEBEC 0040; MONTREAL 0163

1. SUMMARY: ALL THREE OF THE ANITICPATED BYELECTIONS IN QUEBEC'S  
CONSULAR DISTRICT INVOLVE RIDINGS WON RECENTLY BY LARGE MAJORITIES,  
LIBERAL IN TWOCASES AND SOCIAL CREDIT IN ONE. BASED  
ON THE HISTORY OF VOTING PATTERNS, THESE RIDINGS SHOULD  
BE QUITE SAFE FOR INCUMBENT PARTIES. HOWEVER, COMING BYELECTIONS  
FIGURE TO BE MUCH CLOSER. NOT ONLY DOES THE ELECTION OF THE PARTI  
QUEBECOIS CHANGE THEIR IMPORTANCE BY INTRODUCING COMPLETELY NEW  
ISSUES, BUT THE NATURE OF BYELECTIONS MAKES HISTORICAL  
ANALOGIES UNRELIABLE. FEDERAL LIBERAL PARTY OFFICIAL STRESSED  
TO HIS FACTOR OF PERSONAL POPULARITY OF AS YET UNNAMED CAN-  
DIDATES AS IMPORTANT CONSIDERATION IN OUTCOME. SOME OFFICIAL  
FEELS PQ WILL TAKE NO STANCE IN BYELECTIONS AND RANK AND FILE  
VOTES COULD CANCEL EACH OTHER. END SUMMARY.

2. LOUIS HEBERT RIDING IN QUEBEC CITY HAS BEEN A LIBERAL  
PARTY STRONGHOLD. LIBERAL WON WITH MAJORITY OF 20,041 IN 1968,  
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 QUEBEC 00057 091835Z

AND 23,178 IN 1972 AND 25,612 IN 1974. THE LATE ALBIE MORIN  
GARNERED 32,441 IN 1974 WITH NDP OBTAINING 6,829; PC 5,201;  
AND SOCIAL CREDIT 2,799. AS 40 PERCENT OF THE DISTRICT CON-  
SISTS OF THE UPPER-MIDDLECLASS, CONSERVATIVE, SUBURB OF SILLERY,  
IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE IT VOTING ANYWAY BUT LIBERAL. HOWEVER,  
DISTRICT ALSO INDCLUDES HALF OF LAVAL UNIVERSITY REGION  
WHICH GAVE CLAUDE MORIN OF PO LARGE VICTORY IN PROVINCIAL

ELECTION. NONETHELESS, MANY VOTERS IN THAT AREA WHO VOTE EXPRESSLY AGAINST LIBERALS WILL PROBABLY GO FOR NDP RATHER THAN CONSERVATIVES, THUS SPLITTING THE OPPOSITE VOTE.

3. LANGEIER RIDING IS A WORKING CLASS DISTRICT WHICH ELECTED JEAN MARCHAND BY SMALL MARGIN OF 2719 IN 1968 BUT GAVE HIM 8,624 MAJORITY IN 1972 AND 10,277 IN 1974. IN 1974, MARCHAND OUTPOLLED SECOND PLACE CREDITISTE BY 13,616 TO 3,339 VOTES. CONSERVATIVE AND NDP TRAILED WITH 2,532 AND 1,122 RESPECTIVELY. RIDING COULD BE CLOSE IF PQ WERE TO MAKE CONCERTED EFFORT SWING ITS WEIGHT TO CONSERVATIVES. HOWEVER, WE DO NOT BELIEVE SUCH AN EFFORT IS IN OFFING. WHILE PQ CARRIED ALL PROVINCIAL DISTRICTS WHOSE AREAS MAKE UP LANGEIER, TRANSFERABILITY OF THEIR VOTES TO FEDERAL ELECTION REMAINS IN QUESTION THUS, A PQ EFFORT COULD

BACKFIRE - ESPECIALLY IF POPULAR QUEBEC CITY MAYOR GILLES LAMONTAGNE, IS LIBERAL CANDIDATE (AS SEEMS MORE AND MORE LIKELY).

4. TEMISCAMINGUE IN NORTHWEST QUEBEC IS A RIDING WHICH REAL CAOUCETTE TURNED INTO A CREDITISTE STRONGHOLD. DISTRICT TEETERED BETWEEN CLOSE CONSERVATIVE AND LIBERAL VICTORIES UNTIL 1965 WHEN IT STILL INCLUDED PONTIAC REGION AS WELL IN LAST THREE ELECTIONS, HOWEVER, CAOUCETTE WON BY MARGIN OF 5,932, 8,929, AND 7,630. IN 1974, HE GARNERED 14,026 VOTES TO OUTDISTANCE LIBERAL RUNNER-UP WHO HAD 6,396. NDP CANDIDATE HAD 884 VOTES AND CONSERVATIVE 641. PART OF THIS DISTRICT MAKES UP ROUYN-NORANDA PROVINCIAL RIDING WHICH ELECTED QUEBEC'S ONLY CREDITISTE - CAMIL SAMSON - ON NOVEMBER 15. EVEN WITH DEMISE OF CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 QUEBEC 00057 091835Z

REAL CAOUCETTE AND RESULTING PROBLEMS WITHIN CREDITISTE PARTY, THIS SEAT COULD WELL REMAIN CREDITISTE.

5. WE DISCUSSED UPCOMING ELECTIONS WITH ROBERT POIRIER, DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR LIBERAL PARTY OF CANADA (QUEBEC SECTION) WHO STATED LIBERALS WERE IN FOR DIFFICULT FIGHT. NONETHELESS, HE EXPECTS LIBERALS TO WIN TEMISCAMINGUE AND HOLD 3 OF 4 OTHER RIDINGS. WHILE HE IS NOT YET SURE WHERE ONE LOSE WILL COME, IT WAS CLEAR THAT VERDUM WORRIES HIM MOST. HE CAUTIONED THAT PAST MAJORITIES MEAN NOTHING AS THEY WERE BASED ON PERSONAL POPULARITIES OF FORMER CANDIDATES. POIRIER FEELS THAT PERSONAL POPULARITY IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT IN BYELECTIONS AS PROVINCIAL OR NATION-WIDE MOMENTUM DOES NOT BUILD UP. HOWEVER, THAT COULD BE PARTIALLY MITIGATED BY FACT 5 BYELECTIONS WILL BE HELD TOGETHER AND AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN EFFORT WILL BE MADE BY NATIONAL PERSONALITIES INCLUDING TRUDEAU HIMSELF. POIRIER SAID THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO KNOW WHO THE CANDIDATES WILL BE BEFORE FORECASTING HOW CLOSE VOTE WILL BE. HE EXPECTS QUEBEC MAYOR GILLES LAMONTAGNE TO BE A CANDIDATE IN

LANGELIER AND CARRY THAT RIDING WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT WITHOUT HIM.

6. POIRIER DOUBTS THAT PQ WILL TAKE ANY OFFICIAL STAND IN BY-ELECTIONS AS IT WOULD WORK AGAINST THEM. "LIBERALS KNOW WHO PQ OPERATIVES ARE AND WILL EXPOSE THEM SHOULD THEY TRY SUBTLY TO HELP CONSERVATIVES OR CREDITISTES." WHILE POIRIER BELIEVES PQ PARTY STRUCTURE WILL STAY CLEAR OF ELECTION, HE ADDS THAT MANY INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS MAY VOTE IN MANNER THEY CALCULATE WILL BEST AID PQ. IN HIS VIEW, WITHOUT CENTRAL DIRECTION, INFLUENCE OF PQ MEMBERSHIP COULD BE NEUTRAL FACTOR, SOME MAY VOTE FOR LIBERALS ON CURRENTLY POPULAR THEORY THAT REINFORCING HIS PRESENCE IN OTTAWA AIDS PQ WHILE OTHERS MAY OPT FOR JOE CLARK'S CONSERVATIVES ON THEORY THAT LIBERALS MUST BE BEATEN AT EVERY OUTING. IN ANY CASE HE CONCLUDED THAT 60-75 PERCENT OF PEOPLE WHO VOTED PQ LAST NOVEMBER WERE NOT CONVINCED PQ CADRE ARE WILL BE LOOKING AT ELECTION THROUGH CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 QUEBEC 00057 091835Z

ENTIRELY DIFFERENT OPTIC. THEY WILL BE VOTING ON ECONOMIC OR OTHER FEDERAL ISSUES MORE THAN ON WHETHER THEIR VOTE AIDS OR HINDERS EVENTUAL QUEBEC INDEPENDENCE.

COMMENT: POIRIER'S REMARK AMPLIFY DIFFICULTIES OF ANALYZING COMING BY-ELECTIONS EXPRESSED IN REFTELS. QUEBEC ELECTORATE VOTES QUITE DIFFERENTLY IN PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL ELECTIONS. "DOMESTIC" POLITICAL FIGHTS BETWEEN QUEBEC PARTIES HAVE GIVEN WAY TO EXPRESSIONS OF QUEBECOIS PRIDE IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS EVER SINCE DUPLESSIS DIED. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF ELECTION OF PQ HAS SIGNIFICANTLY CHANGED THAT TRADITIONAL. CERTAINLY, IT HAS INTRODUCED A NEW ISSUE. EVEN PARTY ORGANIZATIONS ARE DIFFERENT ABOVE LOCAL LEVELS SO ONE SHOULD NOT ASSUME THAT FEDERAL LIBERALS IN QUEBEC WILL SHOW SAME DEGREE OF CAMPAIGN INEPTNESS THAT BOURASSA LIBERALS DID LAST NOVEMBER. DIFFERENCES IN PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL ELECTORAL DISTRICTING ALSO COMPLICATES ASSESSMENT EVEN IF OTHER FACTORS WERE NOT PRESENT. ALSO RECENT POPULATION CHANGES HAVE BEEN SO SIGNIFICANT THAT THESE BY-ELECTIONS WILL BE LAST FEDERAL ELECTIONS CONTESTED WITH CURRENT DISTRICTS JUST AS NOVEMBER 15 WAS LAST PROVINCIAL ELECTION PRIOR TO MAJOR REDISTRICTING.

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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
22 May 2009  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009